

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-18

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LAGOS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 079139

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD, NI

SUBJECT: NIGERIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION (NBC) PROJECT

REFS: STATE 150078; LAGOS 6858

1. DEPTOFF CONTACTED APRIL 25 BY JAMES O. WELDON, PRESIDENT, CONTINENTAL ELECTRONICS MFG. CO. (LING- TEMCO- VOUGHT SUBSIDIARY), DALLAS, TEXAS, CONCERNING NBC PROJECT FOR WHICH CONTINENTAL BIDDING. PROJECT IS APPARENTLY RADIO TRANSMISSION EXPANSION PROGRAM DISCUSSED REFTELS ENTAILING POSSIBLE US PROCUREMENT COSTS OF DOLS 9 MILLION. GTE INTERNATIONAL OBTAINED EXIMBANK PRELIMINARY COMMITMENT FOR LOAN AND FINANCIAL GUARANTEES FOR PORTION OF THIS AMOUNT LAST AUGUST (COPY OF PC POUCHED EMBASSY AUGUST 28). PC SUBSEQUENTLY EXTENDED TO JUNE 1973. WELDON STATED THAT CONTINENTAL HAS AGREEMENT WITH GTE TO NOVATE CONTRACT TO THEM IF IT IS AWARDED TO CONTINENTAL; IF NIGERIANS NOT AMENABLE TO NOVATION, CONTINENTAL WOULD EXECUTE CONTRACT WITH GTE AS SUBCONTRACTOR.

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2. ACCORDING WELDON, PROJECT NOW RESTRUCTURED TO ENTAIL SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF THREE 500 KILOWATT HF TRANSMITTERS AND TWO 100 KW HF TRANSMITTERS FOR NBC EXTERNAL SERVICE, AND SEVEN 50 KILOWATT MF TRANSMITTERS FOR EXPANSION DOMESTIC BROADCAST SYSTEM. WELDON UNDERSTANDS NIGERIAN OFFICIAL DESCRIBED TO HIM AS " MINISTER OF STATE" (POSSIBLY INFORMATION COMMISSIONER ENAHORO?) HAS TAKEN INTEREST IN PROJECT AND PERSONALLY INSERTED SPECIFICATION CALLING FOR 500 KW TRANSMITTERS AT LAST MINUTE FOR REASONS OF NIGERIAN PRESTIGE.

3. WELDON INDICATED CONTINENTAL LEARNED LAST WEEK THAT OTHER BIDS FROM MARCONI AND ITALIAN FIRM RADIONICS (BOTH INVOLVING US EQUIPMENT PRODUCED BY GATES RADIO) HAD BEEN ELIMINATED FROM CONSIDERATION, LEAVING NIPPON ELECTRIC AS CONTINENTAL' S SOLE REMAINING COMPETITOR FOR CONTRACT. CONTINENTAL BELIEVES ITS BID SLIGHTLY BELOW THAT OF NIPPON. DECISION ON AWARD THOUGHT TO BE" IMMINENT." AS OTHER POTENTIAL US SUPPLIERS NOW APPARENTLY OUT OF RUNNING, AND IN VIEW POLITICAL SLANT ADDED TO MATTER BY HIGH- LEVEL NIGERIAN INTEREST, WELDON SOUGHT OFFICIAL USG ASSISTANCE IN EXERCISING ANY POSSIBLE INFLUENCE ON CONTINENTAL' S BEHALF.

4. DEPTOFF NOTED THAT INFORMATION ON THIS PROJECT HAD BEEN CLOSELY HELD BY MINISTRY OF INFORMATION IN PAST (LAGOS REF-TEL), RATHER THAN BEING HANDLED BY EMBASSY' S PRIMARY TELECOMMUNICATIONS CONTACTS IN MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS. IMPROBABILITY THAT ANY US INTERVENTION COULD BE EFFECTIVE IN INFLUENCING AWARDS PROCESS ALSO STRESSED TO WELDON. HOWEVER, DEPTOFF AGREED IT DESIRABLE THAT US FIRM BE AWARDED CONTRACT, AND EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO BE OF HELP TO CONTINENTAL IN CONVEYING ANY FURTHER INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO EMBASSY ON STATUS OF CONSIDERATION OF BIDS, AND OBTAINING EMBASSY' S ASSESSMENT AS TO ANY RECOMMENDED FURTHER ACTION BY CONTINENTAL (OR ANY AVENUES OPEN TO EMBASSY) TO ENSURE THAT CONTINENTAL BID RECEIVING APPROPRIATE CONSIDERATION.

5. CONTINENTAL IN TOUCH WITH GTE LAGOS REP, BUT ALSO
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WORKING THROUGH GEORGE TEMPLE, MANAGING DIRECTOR, WEST AFRICAN SERVICES, INC., LAGOS. WELDON UNDERSTANDS TEMPLE WELL KNOWN TO AMBASSADOR REINHARDT. TEMPLE CAN NO DOUBT AMPLIFY RATHER SKETCHY INFORMATION ON STATUS OF SITUATION PROVIDED BY WELDON, WHO DID NOT KNOW NAMES OF ANY FMG OFFICIALS INVOLVED. ROGERS

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NMAFVVZCZ

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